

# GREAT BAALS OF FIRE

**THE AIM:** To consider that God is the only God

## The aim unpacked

In this session, Elijah goes up against the prophets of Baal and we see God's power at work through his prophet. Our young people often face situations where they have to stand up for God against the majority. These situations may not be as dramatic as Elijah's experience, but they will take lots of courage. Encourage the young people to keep God at the centre of their lives.

## WAY IN



### theGRID MAGAZINE

**WHAT:** quiz

**WHY:** to introduce the pyrotechnics of the passage to follow

**WITH:** magazine page 119

**1** Give out copies of page 119 and ask the young people to find the article about safety instructions.

**2** Invite them to get into pairs to work out where they might see those instructions and also some places where the warnings might be amusing – for example, on the door of the room where you hold your youth meeting, 'May contain nuts'.

**3** Explain that the Bible story we're going to read would probably fall foul of several safety regulations, even before we get to the merciless slaughter.

**4** If you did the 'Character of a prophet' exercise last session you may want to refer to it now to refresh everyone's memory. (Alternatively, do it now as another scene setter activity.)



### SCENE SETTER

**WHAT:** game

**WHY:** to think about making tasks difficult

**1** Divide the young people into two teams. Each team takes it in turns to name a task the other team has to do (in their imaginations). The other team has to send the task back to the first team but make it slightly more difficult. For example:

- Team 1: Go to the shops and buy some pop.
- Team 2: Hop to the shops and buy some pop.
- Team 1: Hop to the shops and buy a case of pop.
- Team 2: Hop to the shops, buy a case of pop and carry it back one-handed.

You get the idea. The more you do it, the more ridiculous it will become.

**2** Explain that this session will include a ridiculous escalation of a challenge. Look out for it.



### INTERNET GAME

**WHAT:** to think about improving through experience

**WITH:** computer or tablet with internet access

**1** Go to [www.albinoblacksheep.com/games/invisiblomouse](http://www.albinoblacksheep.com/games/invisiblomouse). In this simple game your mouse 'disappears' and you have to guide it over a short course which starts simply and becomes treacherous.

**2** See who can achieve the most levels. If you aren't very good, a gloating caption will tell you that 'You suck' – sorry.

**3** Explain that this game becomes more difficult as it progresses through the levels. To complete it you need to improve and overcome the obstacles. In this session we will see someone else who overcomes obstacles, but not through his own skill.



## LEVEL 1: CONNECT

**WHAT:** drama  
**WHY:** to consider that God is the only God  
**WITH:** Bibles, or printouts of the passage

- 1 Read 1 Kings 18:16–40. If it is read well, this is a strong enough story to hold the attention of most groups. For a very unchurched group it may help if you don't announce that it is from the Bible until after you've read it.
- 2 Invite the young people to ask questions to ensure that they have understood the key point of the story – the power of the true God compared to the lack of power of non-gods.
- 3 Now divide the young people into smaller groups of three or four, if necessary. Invite them to turn the story into a drama. They could bring the story up to date by using contemporary characters if they wish.
- 4 After giving them some preparation time, watch the dramas and allow everyone to comment on each sketch.
- 5 Discuss with the young people whether they think there is a God and what power he has. Lead on to these questions:
  - Do they experience that power at work in their lives? How?
  - If they don't, and they would like to, what do they think they should do about it?
- 6 Allow appropriate time for follow-up, one to one, for anyone who is especially interested.



## LEVEL 2: INTERFACE

**WHAT:** Bible study with illustrations  
**WHY:** to consider that God is the only God  
**WITH:** pack of cards, magazine page 120

- 1 If you can, do a simple card trick or other magic trick to introduce this activity.
- 2 Give out copies of page 120 and read together the story of the magician's volunteer.
- 3 Find out if anyone has ever been in the audience when a magician asked for a volunteer to help with a trick. Has anyone actually been a volunteer? What do they think happened next in the story?
- 4 Read the passage from 1 Kings 18. Explain that, although it looks and sounds like a piece of magic, it was only too real. As the slaughter of the false prophets afterwards demonstrated, these people died for their magic – or lack of it. It also showed that God was the only God around who was able to do this sort of thing.
- 5 Discuss with the group:
  - Why did Elijah encourage the false prophets?
  - Why did he go to so much trouble to make God's job harder?
  - What do the group think the Lord's 'power' (v 46) means today?



## LEVEL 3: SWITCH ON

**WHAT:** Bible study  
**WHY:** to consider that God is the only God  
**WITH:** Bibles

- 1 There is a certain pantomime quality to the way the story is told in 1 Kings 18. Read the passage together and encourage the young people to either boo or cheer as each character is mentioned. Stop for each new character and ask the young people their reasons for either booing or cheering. The correct responses should be:

- The Lord: cheer at God's name, the Creator (Genesis 1:1)
- Elijah: cheer at God's prophet, a man of God (1 Kings 17:24)
- Ahab: boo a bad king (1 Kings 16:30)
- Obadiah: cheer a devout believer (1 Kings 18:3b)
- Jezebel: boo a bad queen who killed the Lord's prophets (1 Kings 18:4)
- Baal: boo a false god (1 Kings 16:31)
- Asherah: boo a false god (1 Kings 16:33)

They are all introduced in the first half of the story so you should be able to read the second half interrupted only by boos and cheers in the correct places.

- 2 Discuss these questions, either as a large group or in pairs (if you discuss them in pairs you will need to feed back to the group as a whole to finish):
  - Why was it seen as so important to be harsh on followers of foreign gods?
  - What might be the lesson for us today about our belief in God?
  - We no longer kill false prophets, but do we do enough to emphasise the true God? What more could we do?

# RESPOND



## MUSICAL

**WHAT:** song

**WHY:** to think about God's holiness

**WITH:** CD or MP3 of 'Can You Heal Us (Holy Man)' by Paul Weller (from the album *Wild Wood*), playback equipment, song lyrics

**1** Play the song 'Can You Heal Us (Holy Man)'. If possible, display or have copies of the lyrics available for people to read.

**2** Briefly discuss the lyrics. Some may find them taunting; others may consider them to be holy.

**3** Alternatively, or as well, you could use the following songs to sing about and praise the power of God:

- 'There Is Power in the Name of Jesus' by Noel Richards
- 'Show Your Power (He is the Lord)' by Kevin Prosch
- 'Send the Fire' by William Booth/Lex Loizides



## PRACTICAL

**WHAT:** prayer

**WHY:** to pray about serving God

**WITH:** watering can, pile of twigs, plastic sheeting

**1** Using the twigs and wood on the plastic sheeting, make an altar for burning a sacrifice, as Elijah did in the reading today. (Don't burn it unless you can build it outside and in safe conditions. And don't use the plastic sheet if you're burning it!)

**2** Ask the young people to stand around the 'altar' and pray quietly to God. This first time they should pray that God's power will be at work in their home. They might want to pray about a specific situation that they are facing.

**3** After a short time of silent prayer, sprinkle some water onto the altar to remind the group that when the water was put onto Elijah's altar it didn't stop God being able to show his power. Likewise, God can use his power for the prayers just prayed.

**4** Repeat the prayer and water cycle twice more, once asking for God's power to be at work when they are at school and once for God's power to be at work when they are out with their friends.

**5** You could give each young person a twig as a reminder that they have God's power with them.



## CREATIVE

**WHAT:** question

**WHY:** to think about serving God

**WITH:** copies of page 121, quiet devotional music, playback equipment

**1** Give out copies of page 121, 'How can God use me?'

**2** Play some quiet devotional music and invite the young people, on their own, to think of answers to the questions and write them down.

**3** Encourage them to share their answers and pray for each other in small groups as appropriate.

### MORE ON THIS THEME:

If you want to do a short series with your group, other sessions that work well with this one are:

**17** *Extreme prophecy*

*1 Kings 17*

**19** *I'm not the one and only*

*1 Kings 19*

**20** *Not beyond justice*

*1 Kings 21:1–19; 22:29–40*

# SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

The world is becoming full of safety instructions. We cannot be trusted to open a plastic bottle of milk without first being made aware of the danger that it may contain milk. Really?

Here are some safety instructions. Where would you expect to see them?

Bible bit  
1 Kings 18

Do you ever find it hard to speak up for God? Perhaps to suggest your friends stop doing something because it upsets you and may upset God too. How many times during the day do you have to speak up for your Lord? If you are anything like me, it won't be many, if at all. Here, though, we see exactly how it should be done. Elijah knows his God and knows the power that God has and so he stands up. He does more than that though – he taunts those who don't believe in God – he laughs at them and then lets God show that he is the One.



Weather  
1 Kings 18  
Isolated fiery downpour followed by widespread heavy showers

ALWAYS DILUTE

DO NOT TRY TO CONNECT TO MAINS WITHOUT READING INSTRUCTIONS THOROUGHLY

STORE IN A COOL, DRY PLACE AWAY FROM STRONG LIGHT AND ODOURS

MAY CAUSE DROWSINESS

BEST BEFORE 2012

DO NOT ADD WATER OR EXPOSE TO HEAT

DO NOT USE IF WEARING LOOSE CLOTHING

DO NOT OVER-TIGHTEN

KEEP AWAY FROM NAKED FLAME

ALWAYS WEAR THE PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT PROVIDED

DO NOT SWIM WHEN THE RED FLAG IS RAISED

MAY CAUSE DEATH

ALWAYS KEEP THE SAFETY CATCH ON WHEN NOT IN USE

DO NOT USE IF YOU ARE TAKING ANY OTHER MEDICATION – IF IN DOUBT, TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

MAY CONTAIN NUTS

MAY DETERIORATE IF LEFT EXPOSED TO AIR FOR LONG PERIODS

KEEP AWAY FROM THE EDGE OF THE PLATFORM

DEEP WATER

ONLY USE AS PART OF A CALORIE-CONTROLLED DIET

THIS VEHICLE MAY TURN RIGHT WITHOUT INDICATING



## THE MAGICIAN'S VOLUNTEER

We were three rows from the front of the stage as the magician called for a volunteer to help with the next trick. The volunteer needed to have a watch. 'Me, me!' I shouted, forcing my hand as high in the air as I could. I was there for a birthday treat and one of my presents had been a cool new watch.

Amazingly, the magician pointed straight at me. His glamorous assistant came down and took me by the hand to lead me back to the stage. Close up she wasn't quite as 'glamorous' as I'd expected. She had lots of make-up on – I mean lots.

The trick involved a piece of cloth and my new watch. And a hammer. Oh dear.

I handed over my watch and, er, watched as the watch was wrapped in the cloth. I was asked to feel the watch

through the cloth to check it was still there. It was.

The magician placed the cloth on a table and hit it with the hammer several times. Nothing could have survived. Nothing mechanical anyway.

He invited me to feel the cloth, carefully. I felt. My worst fears were realised as I felt bits of broken casing and sharp edges through the cloth.

The magician apologised and sent me back to my seat. He said he'd try and think of some way to make it up to me. Before I could make any suggestions he said I should check I hadn't imagined the whole thing and left the watch in my pocket. I thought he was being silly, but...

Have you ever been to a show like this? What do you think happened next? How does this story compare to what happened in 1 Kings 18? How does the magician compare to the prophets of Baal? How does he compare to Elijah?



# RESOURCE PAGE

USE WITH SESSION 18 RESPOND 'CREATIVE'

**How can God use me:**

at school?

at home or hanging out with friends?

at the shops?

when I rest?